



This just in . . . OCC's districts report on new opportunities for banks

Western District

Julia Brown (415) 545-5956

Susan Howard (818) 240-5175

California Mandates Direct Deposit of Public Assistance Payments

Under legislation that went into effect in January, California counties offering direct deposit to their employees must now offer it to public assistance recipients. The intent is to support public assistance recipients in transitioning to mainstream banking. The new requirement offers banks an opportunity to attract and serve new clients by coupling direct deposit accounts with financial literacy education. For more information, please contact the California Department of Social Services at (916) 657-3667, or visit their Electronic Benefit Transfer Project Web site at www.ebtproject.ca.gov.

US Bank Opens Branches in Traditionally Underserved Communities

US Bank has opened three new brick-and-mortar branches in underserved areas of Los Angeles (Boyle Heights and Crenshaw) and San Diego (City Heights) as part of the bank's expansion into Southern California. The new branches provide full banking services to local merchants and residents. In addition, the Crenshaw branch offers a separate building that's available for community meetings. US Bank is planning to open additional branches in underserved urban neighborhoods.

Southwest District

David Lewis (214) 720-7027

Dave Miller (214) 720-7067

Bank of America Offers New Way to Send Money to Mexico

Bank of America recently introduced a new product in the Southwest, SafeSend, that allows consumers to send money by phone or electronically to Mexico, 24 hours a day. In Mexico, the recipient uses a SafeSend ATM card and a personal identification number (PIN) to access the money at any of 20,000 ATMs. SafeSend money transfers cost Bank of America customers \$10 each, and noncustomers \$15 each. For more information visit Bank of America's Web site at

www.bankofamerica.com/safesend

Midwestern District

Annette LePique (816) 556-1832

Comptroller and Kansas City Bankers Take Community Development Tour

On May 21st, the Midwestern District, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and El Centro, Inc., hosted a community development tour in Kansas City, KS for the Comptroller, OCC staff, and representatives from four national banks. The tour included a visit to El Centro's job training program and an affordable housing project they manage. El Centro provides day care and a range of other social services for Hispanic and other immigrants. Richard Ruiz, El Centro's Executive Director, was presented with a NeighborWorks Week poster signed by the Comptroller and others on the tour in recognition of his outstanding efforts in support of Kansas City's Hispanic community.

Get a Tax Refund While You Do Your Laundry

This tax season, University National Bank reached out to laundromat users as a way to develop a new source of customers. University arranged for a tax-preparation firm to set up shop at the Sel-Dale Laundromat in St. Paul, MN. When taxpayers receive their checks they also receive a brochure encouraging them to cash the check at University, which acquired a check-cashing service six years ago as part of a strategy to attract lower-income neighborhood residents to mainstream banking.

Central District

Paul Ginger (312) 360-8876

New Affordable Housing Tax Credits Available in Illinois

Under a new Illinois program, corporations and individuals can receive a half-dollar credit toward their state income tax for every dollar in cash, property or securities that they donate to approved affordable housing projects. Some \$13 million in credits are available annually and they will generate \$26 million in new affordable-housing investments. Rental and for-sale multi-family and single-family developments are eligible under the program, which is administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) and the Chicago Department of Housing. For more information, please contact Barbara Temborius at (312) 836-5353 or www.ihda.org.

Homeownership Counseling in Indiana

The Indiana Association for Community Economic Development (IACED) has launched a Homeownership Education and Counseling Initiative (HomeEC), a program designed to make homeownership education programs accessible throughout the state and to promote consistency among counseling programs. Banks interested in providing homeowner education services are invited to participate in HomeEC, which is funded by the Indiana Housing Finance Authority and the Fannie Mae Foundation. For more information, please contact Amy Murphy-Nugen at (317) 423-1070 or www.iaced.org/homeec.htm.

Southeastern District

Nancy Gresham-Jones (404) 659-8855

Karol Klim (404) 659-8855

Federal Home Loan Bank Providing Development Grants

Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta (FHLBA) has launched a \$1 million program to provide member financial institutions with recoverable grants for affordable housing and community development projects. Projects must meet specified eligibility criteria — including sponsorship by an experienced nonprofit with a strong track record — and must be in AL, DC, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, or VA. For more information, please contact FHLBA at (404) 888-8000.

United Way Implements IDA Program in Atlanta

United Way of Atlanta has implemented Phase II of its Individual Development Account program which will provide 3-to-1 matching funds for individuals starting their own businesses. By 2003, 600 graduates of training programs are expected to be in business for themselves. The program encourages lower-income individuals to develop economic assets, matching their savings with community funds for a down payment on a home or capital in a new business. Several banks have helped make the Atlanta IDA program a reality by holding IDA accounts, providing matching funds, providing grants through their foundations, and providing financial literacy and first-time homeownership classes. For more information, please contact Jim Beaty, Jr., United Way of Atlanta, at (404) 527-7308.

Northeast ern District

John Farrell (617) 424-4995

Denise Kirk-Murray (212) 790-4053

Connecticut Introduces New IDA Program

“There’s no reason why the wealthiest state in the nation should be lagging behind in efforts to help poor families save money,” said Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier, as she introduced a new state-funded Individual Development Account program. The state will contribute up to two dollars for each dollar saved by qualifying IDA program participants, who will be able to use the funds to buy a home, provide a deposit for an apartment rental, start a small business or pursue educational opportunities. Financial institutions housing and servicing the IDAs will be key partners in the new program. For more information, please contact Tom Mongellow, Connecticut Bankers Association, at (850) 677-5060.

New Jersey Offers New State Tax Credit

The New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization State Tax Credit Act, approved in January, will provide up to \$10 million annually in state tax credits to businesses investing in neighborhood revitalization and preservation projects sponsored by nonprofits. Housing and economic development projects will account for 60 percent of the tax credits, with the balance to be earmarked for other revitalization activities, including social and community services. For more information, please contact the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey at (609) 393-3752 or www.hcdnnj.org.

